

REFERENCES - Chart No. SCHERMERHORN-2

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23. *Ibid.*, p. 58. Baptism of twins Reyer and François 5 Jun 1692 is offered as proof of marriage.
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25. *Ibid.*, 1:278. Baptism of Daughter Jannetje 29 Oct 1701 is offered as proof of marriage.
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Compiled by:
 (Mrs. Sam) Elizabeth Meredith
 1720 South Gessner Road
 Houston, Texas 77063-1118
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Pages 2-211 and 2-212 have been removed because of possible copyright infringement.

These abbreviated biographies of Ryer Schermerhorn and Jacob Janse Schermerhorn by Stefan Bielinski can be found at:

<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/s/rjscher5490.html> and
<http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/s/jajscher5448.html>.

The biographies are attractively presented, but contain no additional information than what is found elsewhere in the collection.

SCHERMERHORN

As this is a collection and in no way professes to be made up of all original material, it would be redundant to replicate the work of earlier genealogists when their research is thorough and is presented in a concise manner. The following qualifies in this regard: *Schermerhorn Genealogy and Family Chronicles* by Richard Schermerhorn, Jr., published in 1914 by Tobias A. Wright of New York.

Besides background on the family's possible European origins and American anecdotal material, presented here is Mr. Schermerhorn's research on the first two (and our only two) American generations of Schermerhorns. Also included are the transcriptions of the wills of Jacob Janse Schermerhorn and Ryer Jacobse Schermerhorn. *E.M.*

CHAPTER I

General History

THE VILLAGE OF SCHERMERHORN, HOLLAND.

The very earliest records of the Schermerhorn family were obtained at the village of Schermerhorn, Holland. Owing to the destruction of a greater portion of the village in 1699 by fire, and the burning of the parsonage where the village archives were kept, the latter were lost, and thus opportunity for thorough historical research in connection with the village of Schermerhorn has been impossible.

Schermerhorn is the most important town in the north part of the province of North Friesland, Holland. Geographically it is situated on the north east corner of what was known as Schermer Eiland*, from which position it derived its name, "Horn," "Hock," meaning peak or point. The level of that part of the country on which the village was built, is rather high, surrounded as it is by the two immense "polders" (areas of re-

* *Schermer*, properly called Schermermeer, and usually called Schermeer, is a very considerable enclosure (by dykes), in that part of North Holland which is called the Bailiwick of the Niewburgen. It is bounded on the north by the Meer-Huigemoard; on the west by the district of Alkmaar. Until 1631, Schermermeer was, like many other sections of this part of Holland, which are now very fertile, an extensive sheet of water.

Schermer Groot (Great), also called South Schermer, and Schermer Noord (North), are both in the same Bailiwick, but outside of the Schermermeer

Schermer Eiland (Island) is the name given to a certain district in which are situated, among others, the two well-known villages, Ryp and Graft. When the three lakēs (now drained), the Beemster, Schermer, and Stermeer, were still large sheets of water, this was dry land. They gave it the name of Island, because it could only be reached in boats. Now, although the lakes have been drained, it has still kept the old name.

Schermer Eiland is bounded on the north and west by the Schermer; on the east by the Beemster, and on the south by the Stermeer.

claimed land, formerly seas), called the "Schermer" and the "Beemster." The village and the church tower are thus seen from a great distance.

In former days there was only a chapel at Schermerhorn. After the decay of the church of North Schermer, a handsome church was built in Schermerhorn, which was in every respect proportionate to the numbers and wealth of the inhabitants. For Schermerhorn was, at that time, (1634), a very prosperous place, the number of its inhabitants being estimated at 1500. Among these were twenty-five captains of large coasting vessels, which traded in the Baltic, France, Spain and in other countries. Little by little the number has diminished and finally they (the sea captains) have all disappeared. This has impoverished the village a great deal. Another cause for its decline was a fire, which, in 1699, burned down sixty-three houses in three days' time. The village, however, has still retained some life and prosperity, owing to the passing to Alkmaar and back. All shipments from and to the "Beemster" are made through Schermerhorn, from which a wide canal runs through the Schermer to Alkmaar.

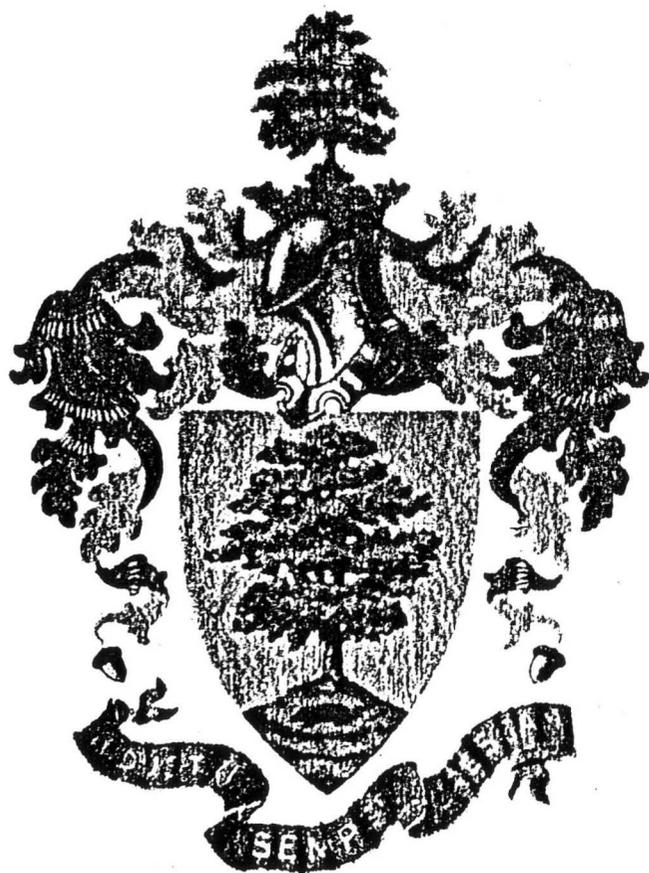
INTERPRETATION OF THE NAME OF SCHERMERHORN.

The old Saxon word Skir became changed in the Middle Dutch period of the language, to Scher, and means clear, pure, bright. The designation Scher Mer was probably given to the lake from the clearness, purity, or brightness of its waters. The word Meer, or Mer, means lake, and the word Hooren, a point, hook, or cape of land. The name Scher-Mer-Horn is simply a compound of these three words, and, like the majority of Holland family names, is of geographical origin. In the early Dutch colonial records, the name appears as Schermerhooren, and was so written by the first generation in this country. The proper pronunciation of the name is *Scare-Mer-Horn*. (Louis Y. Schermerhorn.)

Scare-mer-horn is the nearest proper Dutch pronunciation of the name that an American could approach. The English pronunciation of the name is *Sker-mer-horn*. Only if the name

were German, instead of Dutch, would it be pronounced *Sher-mer-horn*. In pronouncing *Scare-mer-horn*, it is natural to somewhat slur over the first syllable, and *Skem-erhorn* or *Skam-erhorn* results. The pronunciation of the name varies in the many localities where it is encountered, many Schermerhorn families themselves using an entirely incorrect pronunciation.

There have been other versions of the origin of the family name of Schermerhorn. One which seemed quite plausible was to the effect that the name was a compound formed as a result of the marriage of a member of the De Schermer family with one of the family of Hoorn, both of which families are old Holland families and are said to be descended from the nobility. This theory was advanced by the Rev. John F. Schermerhorn, who prepared a Schermerhorn Genealogy in the 1840's, and he possibly obtained it from data noticed in the Herald's office in Paris, France. It is thought that John Jones Schermerhorn, who lived for some time in Paris, was in some way responsible for this statement on record. It was determined, however, to be entirely incorrect during the course of the researches of William C. Schermerhorn and Louis Y. Schermerhorn. The following is quoted from a letter of Dr. Wertheim, who conducted the search for W. C. Schermerhorn. "Let me tell you that the third account (as above) is entirely erroneous, and of no value at all. Hoorn is an extinguished family, by death, and has never been related in any way with the Antwerp family of Schermer."



THE SCHERMERHORN COAT-OF-ARMS.

The coat-of-arms of the village of Schermerhorn, Holland, is of most simple design. Upon the shield appears nothing else but a mole (sable, on a field of natural color, presumably green) in his burrow in a mound of earth. This emblem was known as early as the beginning of the 15th century, but it was not until Oct. 1, 1817, that the "High Council of the Nobility" recognized the village of Schermerhorn as the possessor of this coat-of-arms, and included it on its Register. The origin of this use of the mole as an insignia of the village is interesting. It seems that early in the 16th century or late in the 15th century, before

the Beemster and Schermeer lakes had been pumped dry, and when the inhabitants of Schermerhorn lived mainly by fishing, occasional disputes arose, presumably in connection with fishing rights, between the people of Schermerhorn village and those of villages situated on the other sides of the Lakes. Often these difficulties were amicably adjusted, but the townspeople of Schermerhorn were never satisfied until they had investigated every conceivable phase of the question, "burrowing" into matters connected with the arguments, sometimes long after the whole question had apparently been settled. On account of this characteristic, the term "wrøeter" (burrower) was given to them by their neighbors, and they seemed not ill-pleased with it, as it served to indicate that they were not the kind of people who could easily be taken advantage of, or would forsake antagonizing any condition which might seem to bring injustice upon them. Thus for an emblem they took for themselves the representation of that very well known little "burrowing" animal, the mole. A tablet inserted in the front wall of the church building, when it was erected in 1634, showed the mole as the Coat-of-arms of Schermerhorn.

The coat-of-arms of the Schermerhorn family, as illustrated in this book, was obtained, it is said, by Capt. Joseph Marschalk (a Schermerhorn connection) in 1800, from a painted window of the church in the village of Schermerhorn, Holland. The following description of this coat-of-arms is contained in "Amorial General," par J. B. Rietsap, 1887:

"SCHERMERHORN: D'argent (ou d'azur) a un chene au naturel, pose sur un tertre de sinople, et une taupe de sable au pied de l'arbre. Casque Couronne, cimier le chene. Devise: Industria semper crescam. Translation. Silver (or azure) to an oak natural, placed on a mound, 'sinople;' and a mole, sable, placed at the foot of the tree. Crowned helmet above the oak.

Motto: 'By industry will I succeed (increase, accumulate).'"

This is the coat-of-arms that has been used by the Schermerhorn family as far back as the earliest recollection of any person living to-day, or as far back as any manuscripts or family papers will show. It has been used in various forms, but the

illustration given has been the one to predominate, and is assumed to be the most nearly correct.

Another coat-of-arms has been used for a long period by some branches of the family, principally the Schenectady branch. This is a replica of a seal found on an old deed of land, in Albany, conveyed in 1700 by the Schermerhorn estate as a gift to the Dutch Church. The seal represents a bird with her wings outspread in the attitude of protecting her young and a carrier-pigeon perched on a branch. Another seal is found on the will of Ryer Jacobse Schermerhorn, dated Apr. 5, 1717. The seal was evidently very finely engraved and consists of an armed griffin above a chevron carrying three birds; below the chevron are raised bosses. The crest of the seal is also an armed griffin. A thorough search was made among all the Herald's Colleges in an endeavor to trace the origin of this insignia, but no record or mention of it was found in any place.

Another distinctive seal is found on the will of Ryer Schermerhorn of Rhinebeck, made in 1759. This is a simple design, consisting of what appears to be a horse (a unicorn, perhaps) in the act of rising from the ground, under a tree with an outspreading limb. It may be intended to represent a griffin instead of a horse.

What connection any of these seals have to a coat-of-arms of the Schermerhorn family is a matter of conjecture, pure and simple.

NOTES RELATIVE TO THE SCHERMERHORN FAMILY AND ITS COAT-OF-ARMS.

Extract from a work entitled "Waterson's Antiqua Manhatanica," London, 1809,—Supplement, Page 134.

"In 1661, Petrus Schermerhorne, Burgher of Nieuw Amsterdam, having faithfully performed various services for the Governor (Stuyvesant), was upon his petition, rewarded for the same by a grant of all that land known as the Mole Tract, lying between what is now known as Kip's Bay and the Salt Meadows farther South—also to wear as Coat-of-Armor, in remembrance of and as an accompaniment to the grant, the following arms:

On a field of Blue, a Tree, on a Mount Vert, beneath which, a Mole, *Argent*, the whole in a Bordure *Or*.

CREST.

A Tree, as in the Arms, rising out of a Ducal Coronet, *Or*: To this was afterwards added the Motto in the Latin tongue:

Industria semper crescam."

Petrus Schermerhorn died unmarried in 1671, having seen Nieuw Amsterdam pass from the hands of his master, Stuyvesant to the British. His property, the Mole Tract, passed into the hands of Isaac Keteltas, however, by deed, executed in his own hand, four years before his death, which occurred at (present) Rhinebeck, whither he had retired in his old age. As regards his resting place or other particulars with regard to descendants, I am uninformed, but in no work on record can I find any account of his marriage or other information."

Considerable effort was made covering a period of several years in the 1860s and 70s to trace the above "Antiqua Manhatanica," but without success.

JACOB JANSE SCHERMERHORN.

The name of Jacob Janse Schermerhorn is a familiar one in the early colonial records of Albany, New York. Previous to 1648, however, his activities are not easy to trace, and it appears that he was known during this period as Jacob Jansen, van Amsterdam. It is said that he was born in 1622 (Pearson's Albany Settlers), and it is quite likely that he was among the colonists who sailed from Holland on the ship Rensselaerswyck, Oct. 8, 1636. In the Van Rensselaer-Bower Mss. it is recorded that Jacob Janse, van Amsterdam, was a carpenter by trade, and was engaged for four years, beginning Apr. 2, 1637, at wages of 40f. a year. Part of this time he was employed by Albert Andriesz (Bratt), and in the harvest of 1640, he served under Cornelis Teunisz, van Breucklin. Other references to him contained in the same Mss. are to the effect that on May 1, 1640, he received 32f. extra for "faithful service to the Patroon," and that in 1641 he was employed by Van Curler to do some copying. From that date until Aug. 20, 1643, when his account was

closed by Van Curler, he was engaged with other carpenters, building houses and barns. It is thought that he was one of the young men or boys who came over with Albert Andriesz (Bratt) to assist in the building of a mill at Rensselaerswyck, the contract for which Bratt had entered into with Patroon Van Rensselaer.

But in 1643 Jacob Janse had just reached the age of 21 years and perhaps had gathered together a little capital, sufficient to embark in enterprises of his own, and as the fur trade was of the most importance, he is next found following this vocation. At this time came the realization that his name must be used in full, as should become the position in affairs which he proposed to make for himself, and hereafter *Schermerhorn* was added. The appellation "van Amsterdam" had been used merely as designating the place of his former residence and to distinguish him from other Jacob Jansens. Jacob Janse Schermerhorn had at one time undoubtedly dwelt in Amsterdam, as his father is mentioned as living there in 1654. A certain document refers to "Jacob Janse Van Schermerhorn, formerly a citizen of Waterland, Holland." Waterland was the name of a large territory in North Holland, in which the town of Schermerhorn is located.

Jacob Janse Schermerhorn evidently prospered as a fur trader and in 1649 is mentioned as an "importer" and possessing property which was "somewhat considerable." His enterprise evidently led him into taking advantage of all means available for the substantial increase of his possessions. A business partner of his, Jacob Ryntgens, who dwelt in New Amsterdam, secretly purchased firearms from the employees of the West India Co., and delivered them to Jacob Janse in Albany, who in turn sold them to the Indians. It seems this was against the law, and although Stuyvesant claimed the right to conduct this very same business, and did so openly, he evidently desired to restrict it entirely to himself. He claimed Ryntgens and Schermerhorn were guilty of a felony, and had them arrested and sentenced to banishment with the confiscation of all their property and goods. They were arrested May 29, 1648, and sentenced July 9, 1648. (It is in connection with the papers relating to this action, that the

name Schermerhorn is first found in the Colonial Records.) The sentence of banishment was remitted, August 1, 1648, through the interposition of the "Nine Men" and other influential colonists who thought the sentence undeserved. This action of Stuyvesant formed one of the grounds for a stringent remonstrance, the following year, against his administration, as expressed in a document dated July 28, 1649, addressed to the "Mighty Lords States General of the United Netherlands," and sent by the colony of New Netherland. There were very few of the early traders of New Netherland, who did not experience the same kind of difficulty as that in which Jacob Schermerhorn found himself enmeshed, when Stuyvesant decided to make an example of him. It is well to realize certain facts of the case in this connection. In regard to selling to or trading with the Indians, firearms and liquors, this was what all traders did, not necessarily on account of greed of wealth, but because it was necessary for them to trade with these materials, in order to do any business at all. The Indians would demand their liquor and guns, and would invariably set apart a certain amount of their trade capital for the acquirement of these articles.

Although the banishment of Ryntgens and Jacob Janse was remitted, their estates remained confiscated. This, however, seemed to daunt our ancestor but little, and he evidently lost no time to plunge into active business again. It is quite evident that neither he nor his partner suffered from reputation on account of this early embarrassment, as in 1660-1, Jacobus Reynst (Ryntgens) appears as one of the Deputies and Directors of the West India Co., at Amsterdam, and commissary to the General Privileged India Co., and Jacob Janse served as commissary or magistrate at Fort Orange (Albany) for many years (1652, 54, 56, 57, 58, 64, 71, 72, 74, 75, and probably other years). There were three magistrates and the office was one of the most important in the Colony. In 1676 he is mentioned as constable of Albany. He was also a prominent member of the Reformed Dutch Church at Albany, organized in 1642 by Domine Johannes Megapolensis. He was a member of the Church Consistory, kept the records himself in 1666, and was one of the committee to audit the

church accounts for the greater period between 1665 and 1686. His name is recorded as twelfth male member of the Church.

He made at least two trips to Holland and probably more which the records do not show. The first trip was made in 1654, and in connection with this he acted as attorney for some of his Albany friends. He visited Holland again in 1668 and then, with a party of other New Netherlanders, loaded the ship "King Charles" with "Goods and Cargoe fitted for their country." A recent order of the King's had prohibited more than one ship to sail yearly, where before three had been allowed. A petition, signed by Jacob Janse and his companions, requested a concession for them in this particular case, which was granted.

Jacob Janse was always ready to help out his neighbors and friends, as is evidenced by the many times the records show he had given bond for various people. That he was a stern man and not easily to be trifled with, may be judged, through the records of the suits brought by him against others, for slander, trespass, moneys due and other matters.

He was a large property owner. Exactly what his possessions were previous to 1648, when his property was confiscated, is not known, but on Nov. 29, 1652, he received a patent of a lot in Beverwyck (Albany) and on Oct. 25, 1653, he received a patent for two lots in the same place. These may be the same lots, one of which is described as being in his name in 1664; 60 ft. x 240 ft., on the east side of North Pearl St., between Maiden Lane and State St., and the other held by him, 1676-8, 26½ ft. x 49 ft., on the corner of an alley, on the north side of Pearl and Chapel Streets. In his will his property is described as follows: "My lot of ground lying at the river side at Albany where Cleyn de Goyer lived, which formerly belonged to Cornelis Segers (his father-in-law). * * * my farm at Schotak, the Pasture over against Marte Garitsen's Eylandt, my two houses and lots in ye City of Albany, the one over against Isaak Sybanks and the other where my son Simon Schermerhorn lived, next to Johannes D. Wandelaer, my house and lot at Schenectady where I now dwell." He also must have owned property in New York, as on Oct. 23, 1656, he entered into suit against Paulus Schrick

for non-payment of rent, which action is found among the "Records of New Amsterdam."

It is also recorded that on Dec. 31, 1700, the administrators of the estate of Jacob Jansen Schermerhorn deeded to the Reformed Church of Albany, * * * Pasture land, south of the city, west of the great pasture to the church, along wagon road toward the woods (patent of May 16, 1667), also a lot in the Great Pasture. (patent to Jacob Schermerhorn, Nov. 9, 1652).

Just when Jacob Janse moved to Schenectady cannot be exactly determined. It was probably not long after its settlement in 1662. At least, he must have been a resident in 1673, during which year his wife was called to give court testimony concerning a certain happening in Schenectady. His son Ryer was a freeholder in Schenectady before 1684, and at the time Jacob Janse made his will in 1688 he (Jacob), was residing there.

After the death of Jacob Janse Schermerhorn, his wife received the income from his estate, which was valued at 56,882 guilders (about \$23,000). This included the real estate mentioned and the moneys in Holland. After his wife's death in 1700, the estate was equally divided among the children.

From the foregoing, it is not difficult to fairly judge the character of our ancestor, Jacob Janse Schermerhorn. Coming from Holland, while a mere youth, probably in company with friends or possibly with relations, he indicated his ability at an early date, and rose to positions of trust and importance while still a young man. He possessed great determination and resolution as is shown by his ready ability to make a second fortune after the first one had been taken away from him. He occupied positions of prominence and responsibility in the colony, even before he had reached middle age, and his name is continually associated with others who occupied high positions of authority in the Colony's government. He was broad gauged and conducted his business on a wide scale, dealing directly with his mother country, Holland, and was presumably the owner of vessels plying the river trade between New York and Albany, and part owner, at least, of vessels carrying goods from New York and Holland. Un-